



# *Town of Natick*

## **Winter 2015 Newsletter**

*Issued by Martha L. White,  
Town Administrator*

### **Natick Board of Selectmen**

Joshua Ostroff, Chair  
Charles Hughes, Vice Chair  
Nicholas Mabardy, Clerk  
Richard Jennett  
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### **Community Choice Electricity Supply Program**

Most taxpayers have by now received a mailing from the Town regarding the "Natick Community Choice Electricity Supply Program." This program, authorized by Town Meeting and the Board of Selectmen, provides a unique opportunity for residents and businesses to save money on their electric bill.

All NStar electric bills include separate pricing for (among other things) the supply of electricity and the delivery of that electricity. The Community Choice Program involves the supply of electricity.

Pursuant to a bidding process, the Town entered into a 24-month agreement with Consolidated Edison Solutions (ConEdison Solutions) for electric supply to current NStar residential and business customers. Customers of other electric supply companies are also eligible, but should review their contract conditions to identify any penalty for early termination.

At program launch, which will start on the customer's first meter read after January 1, 2015, Natick customers will pay a lower rate for electricity supply. The ConEdison Solutions rates are locked in for the full 24 months of the contract whereas NStar rates may change every six months. At program launch, the standard residential rate under this program will be 1.6 cents (10.7%) lower per kilowatt hour (kWh) than the comparable NStar rate; the average residential customer will save about \$150 per year as compared to the January 1, 2015 NStar rate. The commercial rate will be 1.2 cents (8.3%) lower and the industrial rate will be 7.4 cents (36.5%) lower than the comparable NStar rates.

A "Greener Option" is also available and, for residential and industrial customers, is less expensive than the January 1 standard NStar rates. Specifically, the residential rate under the Greener Option is 0.13 cents (0.75%) lower than standard NStar rate per kWh and the industrial rate is 5.9 cents (29%) lower. Unfortunately,

the Greener Option rate for commercial customers does not produce savings; this rate is 0.34 cents (2.3%) higher than the standard NStar rate.

All Natick NStar Basic Service customers are automatically enrolled in the Natick Community Choice Electricity Supply Program. Customers who choose to not participate may opt out at any time by returning the postcard enclosed in the Town's informational mailing, or by calling ConEdison at 866-469-8361.

Customers in the Community Choice Program will continue to be billed by NStar for all electricity costs, including ConEdison Solutions charges. The only difference is that the line item for electricity supply will identify ConEdison Solutions as the supplier, and the Community Choice Program rate will be applied. The savings associated with the Community Choice Program rates will be effective after customers' first meter read in January; January bills will reflect the NStar rate prior to the meter read, and the Community Choice Program rate subsequent to the meter read.

Importantly, NStar will still be responsible for the delivery of electricity and all repair and service to Natick customers. If you experience a power outage or other service problem, continue to call NStar at 800-592-2000. Some residents have expressed concern that NStar may not provide timely service for customers in this program. This is not the case. Other communities participating in Community Choice programs report no effect on service.

Customers who are eligible for a low-income delivery rate from NStar will continue to receive that rate and there will be no changes in financial assistance through SMOC or similar programs.

However, customers who currently participate in NStar Budget Billing should be aware that under the Community Choice Program, Budget Billing applies only to the delivery portion of the bill. The supply portion of

the bill cannot be included in the Budget Billing program, so customers' bills will fluctuate depending on the amount of electricity used. Budget Billing customers should carefully weigh their savings through the Community Choice Program as compared to the importance of predictable year-round bills, and may wish to consider opting-out of the program and remaining on NStar Basic Service.

For additional information about the Natick Community Choice Electricity Supply Program please visit: <http://www.natickma.gov/choice-electricity>.

*Please note that promotions by other companies encouraging residents to switch electric suppliers are not authorized by the Town.*

### **Recognition for Natick Energy Conservation Efforts**

The Town was recently recognized by the Patrick Administration for achieving our 20% energy reduction goal, a commitment made in 2008 when we received our Green Community designation. Natick is among only seven Massachusetts communities to achieve this goal!

Through the Green Communities program, Natick has received over \$790,000 in grants and incentives from the Department of Energy Resources and state utilities in support of energy reduction initiatives expected to save the Town over \$240,000 annually. Future projects and grant applications are being planned now.

### **Many Important Staff Changes**

The Board of Selectmen recently appointed Rick White as Natick Fire Chief, following a search and review process consistent with Town Bylaws. Natick will be well served by Chief White, who has been Interim Chief since July 2013 and is well regarded within the profession, the Fire Department and the community. Congratulations Rick!

Natick's long-time Environmental Compliance Officer Bob Bois recently retired, although he continues to provide part-time support to the Conservation Commission. Bob has literally transformed this community in terms of awareness of our energy consumption and the development and implementation of innumerable initiatives, funded largely through grants, resulting in substantial savings (as noted above). Bob's knowledge and service will certainly be missed, but his good work will be carried on by Jillian Wilson-Martin, our new Sustainability Coordinator (the job title of Environmental Compliance Officer has been phased out).

Jillian comes to us from the private sector, where she developed sustainability programs for private businesses, including Fortune 500 companies. A Natick High School graduate and Natick resident, Jillian has quickly familiarized herself with our ongoing sustainability programs and is exploring new and expanded opportunities. Welcome Jillian!

Former Community Development Director Patrick Reffett recently resigned after accepting the position of Planning Director for the Town of Hamilton. Patrick has shepherded some of the most dramatic growth in the town's history, and ably advocated for Natick's interests at the state and regional level. Patrick's good work will have a positive impact on Natick's landscape for generations.

Given simultaneous vacancies in the positions of Community Development Director and Economic Development Planner, we were afforded an opportunity to evaluate the allocation of responsibilities assigned to these positions, and determined that the Town is best served by combining the economic development role with the Director's position (changing the job title to Director of Community and Economic Development), with many of the Director's existing responsibilities – notably management of transportation-related projects – assigned to other personnel. We aim to quickly fill the critical position of Director of Community and Economic Development with a candidate who has outstanding visionary and practical skills to help guide Natick's sound future.

Natick's new DPW Director will join our team in mid-December. Jeremy Marsette comes to us from the Town of Framingham, where he served as Town Engineer and, more recently, Assistant DPW Director. Jeremy brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership skills to a well-run department. Welcome Jeremy! We are grateful to Tom Collins, Deputy DPW Director and Supervisor of Equipment Maintenance, who has ably served as Interim DPW Director since August. Thank you Tom!

### **Town Elections**

We encourage residents to consider serving the town in elective office. Nomination papers for the March 31 Town Election are available in the Town Clerk's office for various offices and Town Meeting. Deadlines for submitting nomination papers can be found on the Town website, and the Town Clerk is available to answer questions in person or by calling 508 647-6430.

